

Eight Automakers' Domestic Output Fell Record 60% For April

Saturday 28 May 2011, by [Nikkei](#) (Date first published: 28 May 2011).

TOKYO (Nikkei)—The March 11 earthquake and tsunami pushed down domestic production by 60.1% on the year at the nation's eight passenger automobile manufacturers last month, the sharpest drop ever.

Forced to suspend operations at some plants or slash output, these firms churned out just 279,345 vehicles in Japan.

Toyota Motor Corp. said Friday that it made 53,823 vehicles at domestic plants, down 78.4%. This marked the steepest decline for the firm since tracking of comparable data began in 1976. It was also the company's first dip below 100,000, and Toyota came in second to Suzuki Motor Corp. in domestic output. Although the automaker restarted domestic plants April 18, its capacity utilization amounted to around half the earlier target.

Honda Motor Co.'s domestic auto output fell 81% to 14,168 units. The firm resumed domestic production April 11, but its capacity utilization rate came to only about 50% of the target. The production slump is blamed partly on the suspension of some assembly lines because of a post-quake decision to change where to build its new Fit Shuttle.

Nissan Motor Co. produced 44,193 vehicles at home, down 48.7%.

Overseas production took a hit as well because supplies of parts made in Japan were disrupted. Vehicles assembled abroad sank 19.2% to 833,137 units for April after having enjoyed year-on-year growth in March. Honda's foreign production fell 43.5%.

For May, Nissan said it expects to produce more vehicles in Japan than it did in the previous month. But capacity utilization rates remain at around 50% for Toyota and Honda. Overall domestic output by the eight automakers is projected to decline about 50% on the year.

Recently, though, parts procurement has improved as parts suppliers have brought factories back onstream. Toyota said it aims to boost domestic output in June to as much as 90% of the pre-disaster target. Domestic production is expected to recover gradually at all eight firms that month and afterward.

Nikkei Shimbun

P.S.

* Nikkei Shimbun, May 28, 2011

<http://e.nikkei.com/e/fr/tnks/Nni20110527D27JFA17.htm>